

Cost Savings and Efficiency

This chapter presents the Mayor's Infrastructure Finance Committee's recommendations regarding ways to save on public infrastructure costs and increase the efficiency of infrastructure service delivery. As throughout the report, the focus of these recommendations are on five public infrastructure elements: streets and highway, water, wastewater, stormwater, and park facilities.

The chapter displays the Committee recommendations within the following three sections:

Big Picture Policies
Systems and Processes
Infrastructure Elements

Big Picture Policies

"Big Picture Policies" embrace recommendations addressing issues of broad community concern. They involve long term and broad-scale public policies influencing the manner and timing of development.

These MIFC recommendations target key elements of the City's basic blueprint for sustaining both the viability of established neighborhoods while accommodating and furthering urban expansion.

Many of the proposals within this section of the report are grounded in the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan and its intended implementation. Other recommendations focus on infrastructure management issues and financial considerations.

The specific areas of recommendation within these sections include: (1) Comprehensive Plan Policies; (2) Temporary Wastewater Services Using Alternative Practices; (3) Special Funding Districts; and (4) Executive Orders vs. Special Assessment Districts. In each case, the recommendations are presented in terms of the exact language adopted by the Committee.

For a fuller description of the background and context of these recommendations as originally developed by the Cost Savings and Efficiency Work Group, see the Appendix of this Report. The Appendix contains the complete text of the Final Report from the Work Group.





Comprehensive Plan Policies

1. Consistency and Continuity of Comprehensive Plan Implementation

“Savings could be achieved if the City commits to following the infrastructure program shown in the Comprehensive Plan.”

“Indiscriminate and/or frequent departures from the Plan’s infrastructure program discourage and undermine long-term facilities planning and reduce the cost savings that such planning can provide.”

2. Prioritize City’s CIP Projects within Comprehensive Plan

“Institute policies and procedures for closely tying the programming of capital projects (i.e., CIP) with the growth phasing program and related policies in the Comprehensive Plan”

3. Extend Time For Phasing of Projects

“We do not need to build out the entire infrastructure for full development of the 25 years in 12 years. We do need to provide the right-of-way per the Plan. We recommend phasing infrastructure as needed.”

“Cost savings could be achieved if the infrastructure improvements called for in the Plan are phased in over a longer period of time.”



4. Guidelines for Projects Not in Conformance with Comprehensive Plan

“Develop clear policies for requests that are not in conformance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan. However, these policies must be open enough to allow projects that create and/or retain jobs for the community.”

“Using a cost/benefit analysis process, consider whether the City should require certain concessions and payments from developers of such projects.”



Temporary Wastewater Services Using Alternative Practices

1. Force Mains as Temporary Facilities

“The Work Group recommends the selective deployment of force mains and lift stations as a temporary means for opening an area for future development. Developers would have to share in the costs of such systems. These systems would be replaced at such time as gravity flow services become available.”

2. Service Considerations

“The use of force main and lift stations would need to take into consideration these issues:

(1) the collection main into which the effluent is being pumped must have available capacity for the projected life of the force main or lift station; (2) a written agreement regarding the specific geographic area contributing effluent via the force main or lift station must be defined prior to the provision of services; and (3) as force mains and lift stations are more expensive to maintain than a gravity flow system, a written agreement regarding the developers contribution to the maintenance of the main or station must be in place prior to the provision of services.”





Special Funding Districts

1. Special Funding Districts

- “(1) The City should investigate the possible use of special funding districts for constructing infrastructure improvements not covered by impact fees;
(2) This should include an assessment of any present authority the City has but is not currently being applied;
(3) It is understood that any use of special funding districts will require City Council and Mayoral approval; and,
(4) As applicable, the use of special funding districts needs to protect the farming community as discussed in the Comprehensive Plan.”



E.O.'s vs. Special Assessment Districts

1. Cost Differences between EO's & SAD's

“It is recommended that the perceived cost differences between projects constructed using “Executive Orders” vs. “Special Assessment Districts” be considered for further study.”

Systems and Processes

“Systems and Processes” involve findings and recommendations that speak to various structures and procedures used by the City of Lincoln to plan for, procure, construct, and maintain urban infrastructure.

This includes the methods employed by the City regarding: (1) Bidding and Contracting Procedures; (2) Right-of-Way (ROW) Acquisition; (3) Handling of Engineering Drawings; (4) Construction Inspection/Observation Programs; (5)



Interagency Coordination; (6) Streamlining Platting Process; and (7) Grant Writing Process.



Bidding & Contracting Procedures

1. Combining Projects into Single Bids

“Lump several construction projects (perhaps covering a two-year period) into a single contract in order to encourage efficiencies and economies of scale that such a method may provide.”

“The following caveats would need to be applied:

- (1) Forewarn local contractors that such an approach is to be implemented so that they can prepare to position themselves strongly for an aggregate contract; and,
- (2) City officials must use appropriate judgement in knowing when it is better to aggregate projects or to leave them separate.”

2. Indefinite Delivery Contracts

“Review indefinite delivery contracts for professional and construction projects and give consideration to the use of multiple firms when so doing.”

3. Statement of Intent

“Have the City Council pass a ‘Statement of Intent’ expressing the City’s intent to make greater use of multi-year contracting for capital construction projects.”





Right-of-Way (ROW) Acquisition

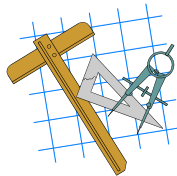
1. Advanced ROW Acquisition

“The City of Lincoln should move ahead with a Memorandum of Understanding with Lancaster County for joint acquisition policies and procedures. This should be formalized as soon as possible.”

“The City should get an early start for acquisition by providing staff with ROW plans at least one (1) year in advance. This will require a change in internal policy but does not require a change in any statutes.”

2. ROW Acquisition Resources

“The City needs to ensure that fiscal resources are available to have enough staff to complete the ROW acquisition task in a timely manner.”



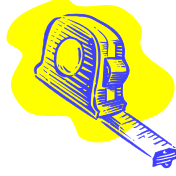
Handling of Engineering Drawings

1. Engineering Drawings

“In order to have more timely construction drawings, City staff should undertake the following:

- (1) Give priority to complete plans over partial plans. Note that this refers primarily to subdivision work.
- (2) Put the responsibility on the private developer and design team to be in compliance with City and State guidelines and requirements.”





Construction Inspection/ Observation Program

1. Construction Inspection/Observation Program

“(1) Ensure that adequate resources are made available to the City’s construction inspection/observation program, although this may not necessarily include adding staff; (2) Increase training for inspectors/observers; and, (3) Provide inspectors/observers with greater authority than they have currently.”



Interagency Cooperation

1. Interagency Coordination

“Examine and describe ways for enhancing the communication for and coordination of capital projects between Public Works & Utilities, LES, LPS, Parks and Recreation, other utilities, and other City and County agencies.”



Streamline Platting Process

1. Streamline Platting Process

“Consider ways to streamline the platting process.”





Grant Writing Program

1. Grant Writing Program

“It is recommended that efforts be made to enhance the use of the City’s grant writing program to obtain Federal and State funds for public infrastructure improvements.”

Infrastructure Elements

“Infrastructure Elements” findings and recommendations involve the more detailed aspects of urban infrastructure design and construction.

These include: (1) Street Design Considerations; (2) Burying Overhead Lines; (3) Costs for Utility Relocation; (4) Sidewalks Along Arterial Streets; and, (4) Sureties for Street Trees.



Street Design Considerations

1. “Outside-In” Street Phasing

“Phase construction of urban arterials to build from the outside lanes inward. This would allow for stormwater and other utilities to be put in place at the time of initial roadway construction and eliminate costly relocation at a later date.”

2. Future Street Grades

“Coordinate with Lancaster County on the design and alignment of new county pavement projects within the City’s future growth tiers.”



3. Make Use of Paved County Roads

“Make efficient use of paved county roads as the city phases in urban improvements.”

4. Dual Left Turn Lanes

- “(1) Retain 28 foot medians for future turning lane improvements as warranted;
- (2) For purposes of estimating future costs, assume only one dual left turn lane per mile per section line road; and,
- (3) Assume dual left turn lanes at the intersection of all arterials.”

5. Retaining Walls

“Consider means for using grading and wider rights-of-way to minimize the need for retaining walls along arterial streets.”

6. Signals

“Reduce the number of traffic and pedestrian signals assumed per mile in the future cost estimates.”



Burying Overhead Lines

1. Bury Overhead Lines

“Bury all overhead distribution lines as part of future arterial street projects in growth areas – regardless of who has to pay.”





Cost for Utility Relocation

1. Utility Line/Main Relocation Costs

“Require utilities to move their mains or lines (and in some cases bury overhead lines) in the public right of way, and require them to bear the cost of such efforts (most notable those not currently paying for moving their mains or lines -- LES, water, and wastewater) when necessary as part of an applicable street construction project.”



Sidewalks Along Arterial Streets

1. Sidewalks Along Arterial Streets

“Retain the present subdivision standard requiring installation of sidewalks along arterial streets as part of the platting process.”



Sureties for Street Trees

1. Sureties for Street Trees

“(1) Eliminate bonding for street trees along arterial streets; and,
(2) Require the home builder or buyer to install the street trees at the time the home is constructed; or,
(3) Allow for payment in advance in lieu of bonding as a subdivision requirement.”

